OPERA'S OPENING. SOCIETY'S PARADE.

The Metropolitan Crowded by the "First-Nighters."

Melba and the Two De Reszkes, in "Faust," the Musical Attraction.

These Artists in Fine Voice, but the Audience, Just as Last Year, Mild in Applause.

Brillant Array of Costumes in the Boxes, but Some Well-Known Faces Missing.

NO VANDERBILT THERE, OF COURSE

Numberless Other Candidates for Supremacy in the World of Fashion.

Deera House was occupied, and every available vantage point crowded. On the main floor men and women stood ten deep, tightly Jammed behind the last row of chairs.

The boxes were filled with the swell folks of New York; the orchestra assembly was made up principally of the genteel element and the balconies were througed with clerks, tradespeople and poor musicians. Some came to hear the opera, some came to hear the opera, some came to with the swell folks of the evening, looking like a cameo cut all in white against its deep red velvet hangings. Miss Kate Brice was in yellow satin, and had a bunch of scarlet flowers on her left shoulder.

In the Frenchiest of gowns, as usual, combining lace, satin, jewela, feathers and true Mrs. Rob-

Lipson the stage were the De Reszkes, Mel-ba and one or two other recipients of fab-ba and one or two other recipients of fab-

dience went wild with delight over the final | vet on her left shoulder drick between the acts as of yore.

Anticipation Versus Realization, There is something attractive in the an- on her hair. ticipation of the first night of the opera

Beason that is never realized when the
night finally arrives. It is this alluring
promise that attracts the people, who other
wise would not attend. And it is only in
the proseque of these people that the first the presence of these people that the first them up.

As a matter of fact the "first night" of last night was extremely prosaic. This mind you, does not refer to the performance itself. Alan Dale will tell you all about that. But to any man who has ever witnessed a first place to the performance of the control of the performance itself. Alan Dale will tell you all white signettes in her hair.

Witnessed a first place to the performance itself. Alan Dale will tell you all white aignettes in her hair. would have been utterly uninteresting.

the stage its plot and its movement are in charming lines by blue knots. thinking spectator. Yet had the De Reszkes on it. and Melba responded to the applause that Mrs .Elbridge T. eGrry and her two greeted the song "Anges pures et radieux" daughters were in their box, the mother

Half the box holders, stanch in their adherence to society's inflexible rule, arrived nearly an hour after the performance had begun. While the curtain was up they talked. Between the acts, when there was excellent opportunity to talk, they remained silent, in graceful attitudes, and allowed the \$5 crowd in the orchestra to gaze upon them. Three or four of the boxes contained only two occupants. The empty chairs in these boxes were the eyes in the "standing room" throng. All of which is as it was last year and as it will be next year.

The interesting experiment of the management to improve the appearance of the house and increase the comfort of the audience by requesting the women in the orchestra to remove their hats was not a complete success. Some women removed their hats and some did not. This, too, was just as it had always been. There were perhaps forty women in the orchestra whose hats were firmly planted upon their heads and no amount of staring or glaring induced them to remove their headegar. These hats, however, were for the most it little bits of things—only a married man all have dreamed that they cost more in a dollar or two, and they interfered the nobody's comfort. Still, there were in the audience who thought barsh bughts about the stubbornness of woman, if one man even went so far as to say diy that "the ladles might have been a see more gracious."

BRILLIANT ARRAY OF TOILETS. Tulle Siceves, Resembling a Danseuse's Fluffy Petticoats, a Striking

Novelty.

Every other woman wore tulle at the pera last night. Not tulle gowns, to be sure, for these have long been relegated to oblivion, but tulle sleeves, a sort of ballet skirt arrangement on their shoulders, sticking out like the fluffy petticents of a

premiere danseuse Mrs. Prescott Lawrence had very much inflated ones on her maize satin gown, made with one of those new, stretched bodices, on which drapery takes the place of darts, disposing of the fulness in witching folds, caught up with jewels. In her case it was a large diamond brooch. A high Princess of Wales collar of pearls went around her throat, and a pair of tulle Psyche wings were poised in her hair, fastened there by a diamond pin.

In Mrs. Levi P. Morton's box were two of her daughters, provided with these airy arm clothes, and double mercury of sliver gauze on top of their high coiffures. Miss Edith and Mis Lena Morton were dressed in shell pink satin, with pink tulle sleeves, and had huge bunches of violets pinned on their bodices. Mrs. Morton was very effectively gowned in cardinal satin, set off by a point lace garniture on the waist, and numerous diamond ornaments. Instead of a necklace, she wore a black velvet band around her throat.

Mrs. Hermann Oelrichs, in pale blue

satin, was one of the handsomest womer But the Ogden Millses, the Whitneys and tulle, of course, but made in round puffs instead of standing out #lke almost every body's else. Two bows stood guard before them, and seemed to be a continuation of the drapery which answered the double purpose of a bertha and a back-Mme, Melba ground for jewels. A very wonderful blue feather arrangement loomed up on her head, a concentrated pompour, as it were, made up of ostrich tips and aigrettes, Stringanfter string of pearls around her neck almost filled up the "decolletage," and served as a kind of yoke.

Mrs Calvin S. Brice, accompanied by her

HE opera season opened last night with the production of "Faust." two daughters, occupied her box. She was gowned in ruby velvet, which seemed to Every seat in the Metropolitan gowing in ruby velvet, which seemed to be let in in panels on her skirt, and make

Some came to bear the opera, some came to see the rich people and some came because it was the first night. These various elements made up a responsive audience, keenly appreciative and thoroughly euthuslastic.

ba and one or two other recipients of fabulous salaries, who sang divinely, and the bulk of the same minor singers who appeared in "Faust" on the same stage last year.

The stars were fairly bombarded with flowers. The ballet danced badly. The authorized the foundation of the costume has a big row of black velocity delicht over the final

trio. The men in the orchestra went out to Mrs. Henry Clews were that low, diamond coronet of hers, which goes so well with her And there you have a clear idea of how style of hairdressing. Her gown was sim-"Faust," that sublime soul's tragedy, ple, of white satin, its only touch of color wrought by the great Goethe and set to being a bunch of pluk roses hanging from heart-stirring harmony by the great Gou the left shoulder, which seems to be the ned, was heard for the first time this sea-son by New York's fashionable opera pub-Miss Elsie Clews was dressed in dark green velvet, with white tulle frills on her arms and a set of glistening Mercury wings

witnessed a first night in a European opera pinkish mauve satin, and had puffed chif-house, and who has become accustomed fon sleeves to match. The bodice was to New York's opera audience, the appear- overlaid with white ince, on which knots ance and the spirit of last night's audience of absinthe green satin appeared. She also

man being passed through in this world. palest blue satin, the bodice of which was And be it ever so badly produced upon veiled with a pearl beaded net, caught up such as to absorb the attention of every wore a number of diamond ornaments

by singing "Home, Sweet Home" or "The wearing white satin, rich with point lace Last Rose of Summer" last night's audience and diamonds. Miss Mabel Gerry was

to-do people there who could have afforded and, as usual, her box was the centre of to pay \$5 for orchestra chairs, but who evidently did not think that pleasure worth the price. Then there were seedylooking individuals who must surely have stretched a point to pay a dollar for the gratification of their musical tastes.

Arrived Late, of Course.

Half the box holders, stanch in their ad-



Leaving the Metropolitan Opera House Last Night After Seeing "Faust."



SCENE IN A BOX AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE LAST EVENING.

At the Metropolitan.—By Alan Dale.

"Open, sesame!" cried Impresario Maurice Grau at the Metropolitan Opera House last night, and behold it was even and unequivocally so. The lovely, large and scarlet moment had arrived at last. The precise period at which Italian opera may be said to "touch the spot" of this suave and sympathetic community had come. The alarum had been set for November 16, and off it

went, with a ting-a-ling-a-ling, followed by a pompous v'lan, and a bang!

All Forty-second street pulsated, because such an opportunity for pulsation occurs but once a year. You could said opera at the elevated railroad stations, where unkempt gamins roared "booksothopera" in your ears. You looked in unmitigated contempt at such unhallowed playhouses as the adjacent Empire, Casino and Broadway, where not a diamond would be displayed, or a bosom-naked yet unashamed-glitter in the luminous electricity. In fact, you felt distinctly that nothing was worth while but the Metropolitan. And if you didn't think that, you didn't deserve to be alive in this glorious, free metropolis. Poor old Mapleson, struggling with refractory artists down in that nasty, low neighborhood known as Fourteenth street, where people actually sell things during the day, would have realized the utter futility of musical endeavor in New York if he could have had a peep at the inspiringly animated scene enacted out-

side of the large dove-colored opera edifice. Thousands of carriages were safely delivered of bevies of enormously decorated ladies, with solemn, impressive and dead-in-carnest faces. Coachmen bellowed, and footmen parleyed, and mentals salaamed, and horses neighed Wagnerianly. And in the outer lobby everybody looked for acquainteness, in order to be convivial and "in the swim." You were glad to recognize anybody-even the uncomfortable folks with whom you 'crossed' last year, and whom you decided to cut dead when you reached New York. The Metropolitan Opera House, as I've often said, is nothing but a big club, and if you've one ounce of self-respect you don't want to go it alone. If you can't fron-fron in and out of the boxes, and peacock about among the temporarily elect, you can at least pretend that you are dreadfully in request, that people wont let you alone, and that your circle of friends is really disgustingly swollen. When you are in Rome you must do as the Romans do, and when you are at the Mctropolitan you might just as well be a humbug with the rest of them. It is very easy when you know how.

And when you had passed the Sacred Gateman, you heaved a sigh of mellow relief, and turned just one contemptuous, pitying glance at the struggling ones outside. You drank in heavily perfumed air (which was very bad for your lungs), and as you snatched a pink pro gramme from the pink mound, you began to feel that you were "in it" once again. People are not in a hurry to get to their seats at the Metropolitan, because anticipation is always so much more titiliant than realization. One of these days Mr. Grau will know this, and wisely decide, that on the opening night of the Italian opera season there shall be no opera. It is quite superfluous, only nobody dares to admit it. The ideal Italian opera "first night" would be an occasion there were the state of the casion upon which, when all were seated, Mr. Grau could come to the foot-

lights and explain things to the plebs.
"There," he could exclaim. "In box No. 7, is Mrs. C. W. Astor. She will be with us, wearing all her diamonds, on odd nights and even matinees. Mr. J. J. Astor-look at him, ladies and gentlemen-has chosen even nights and odd mati-nees." (Here Mr. Grau cauld crack a topical joke or two.) "In Box 20 you may notice D. O. Mills, and in box 30, W. C. Whitney. Calvin S. Brice I have secured and bottled up in box 18, and in box 11. I am proud to say that I can show you Perry Belmont. Pause for a moment, I beseech you, and glance at Levi P. Morton in box 16, and then in box 23 feast yourself upon the vision of Elbridge T. Gerry."

This, it seems to me, would be scarcely less humiliating than the programme's diagram, which was again in evidence last night—a stigma upon the community. Everybody was numbered and parcelled off, in slicht obedience to sycophantic curfosity. This outrageous feature never excites any harsh comment. The numbered and parcelled ones don't object in the least. They wear their labels proudly, for do not the tickets say: "You are rich and well-bred, and you do not belong to

The auditorium was soon crowded and everybody looked clean and nice for the occasion. There were a few dowdies in the orchestra seats, but the presence of a score of dowdies is to be encouraged, rather than discouraged. A perpetual smile, you know, wearies. Mr. Grau, determined to be timely, had publicly asked ladies to come unhatted, which, at the gorgeous Metropolitan, seemed rather a cheap thing to do. It was like saying "Bables in arms not admitted," or "Gentlemen are kindly requested not to eat peanuts during the performance." At the Metropolitan everything's right, and if ladies wear Elffel Tower hats, it is because Eiffel Tower bats are the thing. It is impossible to be kif-kif at the

The opera was "Faust." Don't blame me for saying it. I am paid to give you useful information, and I've got to do it. The opera, I repeat, was "Faust," a work by Gounod, founded upon the Goethe legend, and warranted not to distract anybody's attention. A new opera on an opening night would be positively fatal. "Faust" everybody knows by heart, and nobody feels compelled to listen to it. The fact that it has been done to death at the Metropolitan, that It was the "great card" a few seasons ago with an "ideal cast" means nothing at all. New operas would distract attention from new dresses, and that would not be tolerated. Mr. Grau, who is a Machiavelli, doesn't worry himself about new operas. And very few new operas are produced nowadays. Only commoners lige Mapleson, believe that the public clamors for operatic novelty. "Funst" sung as it was sung last night is a sensual delight. The moment bignor Mancinelli had settled down to business, that lovely, familiar overture

Be the action of the common of

ment's notice.

The "accessories" of the performances were equally stereotyped. There were the ugly, old garlic-cating isdies in the chorus, the usual tripping tra-la-la ballet dancers—perhaps a trifle comilier than of yore—and the same scenery. A few "posits" were thrown to Jean de Retzke and to Melba, but they were not showered upon the stage like rath, as enthusiasts to-day will probably declare.

The season, however, is now fairly started, and that is the main point. The latital performance has been given. The social ice has been smashed, and the coming nights will probably be rosy ones for Maurice Grau. The big Metropolitan has emerged from its long, lugiorious in the arm of the only opera company that New York will patronize has stamped itself once more upon the community.

HOW IT APPEARED TO "CHOLLY."

First Night of Opera Offers an Interest. ing Study of Society with a Big S, as Seen on Farade.

All society is divided into three parts-the centre, the circumference and the

At least it is so at the opera. There was a time when the exact position of the centre was absolutely certain, and the length of the radius was definitely first. But that was when the fine world knelt at the feet of Mrs. Astor and accepted the measurements of Ward McAllister.

Since then the times have changed and we have changed with them. To day the centre has shifted and there is a well-grounded suspicion that it wobbles about to such a degree that nobody will dare to say just where it is. In this respect it is like the North Pole; we can get in its neighborhood, but we can't touch it. The circumference, however, is just about as inelastic as formerly, and the fringe is not a whit less abundant or tentative.

In the hunt for the centre in the Met-ropolitan Opera House last night, some of the more old-fashioned swells still focussed their lorgnettes on the Astor box, where the beautiful young wife of John Jacob sat and smiled at the homage paid her, while her mother-in-law and husband nodded approvingly. Others, with a thirst for new sensations and a longing for new conditions, looked long and earnestly at the box of William C. Whitney, but there were no signs of a coronation there.

In the Ogden Mills Box. And still others fixed their gaze upon the Ogden Mills box, and there they found at least one woman who has no doubt as to where the throne of the social world is, or who sits upon it and wields the sceptre of

But around the wabbling social centre there are many proud and rebellious spirits. and if any one is queen she can be only certain that she is queen to herself.

When the performance was on, how-

ever, the women in the opera house forgot their rivalries and their jealousies. When Jean de Reszke sang, the maidens went into raptures and could scarcely contain themselves, and when Edouard beliewed out his Brobdinguagian bass the matrons and the widows split their gloves. It's an odd thing how maidens run to tenors and women of matrimonial experience prefer bassos.

Close by the Astor box sat Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Wilson, both with hair of snowy whiteness and both paying rapt attention to the opera. In all the dazzling, scintillating, money-marked horseshoe of parterre boxes there were no truer devotees to music than this handsome old couple. The familiar face of their youngest daughter, however, was missing. She is now Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., and is abrond. The box didn't look quite right

No Vanderbilts There. No Vanderblit, nor any connection of the family, was there, of course, Cornelius Vanderbilt's box was occupied by some friends.

August and Perry Belmont, who refused to attend the Horse Show for reasons of their own, were both there in their boxes and apparently without resentment to any living being. Perry was on the south side and August nearly opposite. If Mr. and Mrs. Oliver H. P. Belmon were at the open I could not see the

They have no box and were not am-They have no nox and were not man of the holders of orchestra chairs furnished by the management. Oliver is a subscriber to he Opera Club, but he was not in the minibus box, where some of the fringe are wont to roost.

One of the handsomest women in the opera house was Mrs. Willie Burden, and tifere was many a chapple that would have crowned her queen if he had had the pow er. The Iselins were therereof course, as were the Roosevelts, the Gerrys, the Havens, the Bowdolns, the Stillmans, the Hitchcocks, the Pierpont Morgans, the Rhinelander Stewarts, the Bayard Cuttings, the Brices, the Mortons, the Blisses, and the Julilards. In this list is hidden the centre of society. Let him find it who can-Away from the Centre

Very much further away and close to the rim of the circumference, but on which side of it I shall not say, were the de Barrys, the George C. Boldts, Jefferson Levy, the Westervelts, the Ditsons, the Dicksons and lots of other people whom it is precious and space is restricted.

This much, however, may be said without fear of contradiction-there was never a more brilliant audience in the Metropolitan Opera House. And this is equally true, whether we look at it from the standpoint of society, of wealth, of apparel, of physical beauty or of mere numbers. If another human being had been squeezed into the auditorium of the Opera House last night the regulations of the Fire Department would have been violated, in all

How about the fringe of society, did you ask? Now, for goodness' sake, don't get a wrong idea about the fringe at the opera. It is always well woven and eminently respectable. Some of it has better blood and less money than some of the molecules money and less of a pedigree than others of those same central molecules. You must have money, and you must have had it for some time and given evidence of that fact by spending it before you can hope to vault the circumference. But there is nobody in the fringe that is quite without hope, or ought to be.

Old Families. Of the old familiar fixtures Clarence Collins was just as pompous as ever. If Mr. Collins keeps on swelling. Mr. Grau will have to enlarge the corridors of the Opera-House.

There was also General Sickles, who made his entree, as usual, in the middle of one of the most interesting solos and divided the attention of the audience with the sololst. And, of course, Dr. Helbrook Curtis, with the old familier odor of the atomizer about him, was there, and Tom Howard, best preserved of antique dudes, and Harry Gillig, whom all the fishes in Long Island Sound know, and William O'Brien McDonough, the California mile lionaire, and Beverly Tilden, who loves the opera as the flute soloist loves his flute; and Willie Schuetz, huge and oleaginous and always ready to applaudhla brother-in-laws, the De Reszkes; and Bagby, who given the concerts, and his deadly rival, Clarence Andrews; and Stanford White, the archi-Andrews; and Stanford White, the architect; and Preble Tucker, originator and promoter of the Opera Cinb; and Ed Lauterbach, who was going to rebel if W. J. Bryan was elected; and Bob Dunlap and Jim Breslin and John Schoeffle and Grau himself, all of whom are worthy of mention, because it is to their enterurise in putting out their money that we have opera at all; and Baron Le Ghalt and Frince Louis Savoy, whose—but what's the use? If there was anybody in town that was not at the opera I didn't miss him.

CHOLLY KNICKERBOCKER.

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